

Concussion

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a disturbance in brain function caused by a direct or indirect force to the head. It results in a variety of nonspecific symptoms (like those listed below) and often does not involve loss of consciousness.

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

Concussion should be suspected in the presence of any one or more of the following after a possible injury to the head or neck:

- Symptoms (such as headache), or
- Physical signs (such as unsteadiness), or
- Impaired brain function (e.g. confusion), or
- Abnormal behavior

Today the following symptoms are present:

Physical		Thinking	Emotional	Sleep
Headaches	Sensitivity to light	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Nausea	Sensitivity to noise	Problems concentrating	Sadness	Sleeping more than usual
Fatigue	Numbness/Tingling	Problems remembering	Feeling more emotional	Sleeping less than usual
Visual problems	Vomiting	Feeling more slowed down	Nervousness/Anxiety	Trouble falling asleep
Balance problems	Dizziness			

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be removed from play, and told to seek medical evaluation. "When in doubt, sit it out!"

Signs to watch for (RED FLAGS): If you or your loved one shows these signs after a head or neck injury go to a hospital at once. These problems might develop over the first 24 hours after an injury, but typically develop in the first 6 hours.

- Have a headache that gets worse
- Are very drowsy or can't be awakened (*woken up*)
- Can't recognize people or places
- Have repeated vomiting

- Behave unusually or seem confused; very irritable
- Have seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
- Have weak or numb arms or legs
- Are unsteady on your feet; have slurred speech
- Neck pain
- Loss of consciousness

Remember, it is better to be safe. Consult your doctor after a suspected concussion.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Concussion usually results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment that resolves spontaneously over time. It's important to rest and avoid doing things that make your symptoms worse. After having an evaluation with your physician, they will advise you on how and when to return to work, school and exercise.

RETURNING TO DAILY ACTIVITIES

- 1. Rest is the key to recovery.** You should NOT participate in any high risk activities (*i.e., sports, PE, bike riding, etc.*) that place you at risk for re-injury. Only do physical activity as instructed by your concussion care team. Limit any activities that keep you from getting your needed rest or that worsen your symptoms.
- 2. Limit activities that require thinking or concentration if it makes you feel worse** (with your headache or dizziness). This includes schoolwork, tests, and homework, as well as job-related activity. We will help with school and work accommodations.
- 3. Get lots of sleep.** No late nights. Keep a normal bedtime on weekdays and weekends. Take naps and rest breaks when you feel tired and fatigued.
- 4. It is normal to feel sad and frustrated,** especially when you cannot be as active as usual.
- 5. Drink fluids and eat regularly.** Continue to eat a healthy diet with fruits and vegetables.
- 6. For school age children, inform the school about the injury and accommodations your concussion team has recommended.**
- 7. Immediately STOP any activity that makes your symptoms worse.** Retry again the next day. Often how you feel improves day by day. But ignoring symptoms can prolong recovery time. Slowly and carefully return to normal activities, as directed.

